

A
R E B U K E
TO THE
S I N
O F
Uncleanness.

By a Minister of the
CHURCH of ENGLAND.

L O N D O N :

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To the SIN of

UNCLEANNESS.

THE Sin of *Uncleanness* is so contrary to the Purity of a *Christian*, and so offensive to all that *partake of the Divine Nature*, that it were to be wished, we had no Occasion to speak or think of it. The Thoughts and Ideas of it are so disgustful, that we should be very happy if we could arrive at such a State as that to which the Apostle advises, (Eph. v. 3.) viz. *That Fornication and all Uncleanness might not be so much*

as named amongst us, as it becometh Saints; that is, as it is fit for Holy People; and such all *Christians* by their Vows and Profession are bound to be. But since upon some Occasions it must be mentioned, our Language has express'd it by a very proper Name, in that we call it *Uncleanness* it self; that is, the most hateful Filth and Nastiness: so that the very Name tends to raise our Indignation against it, whenever 'tis mentioned.

And upon this Account, the *Smut* and *Nastiness* of some Peoples Language, is the rudest Affront to Christian Conversation, and to all Civil Society: even as affronting as the Filth of a Dunghill serv'd up at an *Entertainment*, or a Toad or Serpent cast into the Bosom of a *Guest*. These things are not more abhorr'd by our Senses as Men, than they ought to be by our Soul and Spirit as Christians. And if the Minds of any are so vitiated and depraved, as to take delight in such poisonous Fancies, yet 'tis a cruel piece of Service to please People to their Hurt and Destruction. As to which many of our Poets of these latter Days, especially those who have writ for the *Play-House*, have brought upon themselves great Guilt, as

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they will one Day find: as also will all such as write or print filthy Language; or cast, paint, carve or draw filthy Pictures or Figures in Books, or otherwise, or upon Walls, or other open Places in the Streets, to be seen by every one, to the great Offence of all good Men, and the Corrupting the Minds of others.

The Truth of this will appear from the *horrible Nature* of the Sin itself: of which we may in some measure be made sensible, by the just Consideration of the following Particulars; in the Perusal of which, I pray God to assist all that read them with the Light and Influence of his *Holy Spirit*, that they may treat this Vice with that perfect Indignation and Abhorrence that it deserves.

I. 'Tis a Vice that sacrifices a Person's Honour, and loads him with insupportable Shame. The Rebuke of *Tamar*, to her Brother that would have forced her, was very discreet (2 *Sam.* xiii. 12.) *Nay, my Brother, do not this Folly; no such Thing ought to be done in Israel: And I, whether shall I cause my Shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the Fools in Israel.* Folly, Guilt, Shame, and Contempt, are the certain Inheritance of such unclean Wretches, as will not learn

to possess their Vessel in sanctification and honour, as the God of Purity requires us, (1 Theff. iv. 4.) And therefore Solomon, who found the Truth of this by sad Experience, admonishes all young Men, that they by no Means give their Honour to the Cruel, (Prov. v. 9.) to that cruel Sin, which at once preys upon a Man's Body, Soul, Estate and Salvation. And if they will not take Warning, he tells them what will be the End of it, (Prov. vi. 33) *A Wound and a Blot shall he get, and his Reproach shall not be wiped away.* The black Guilt of this Sin, brings an intolerable Shame with it; as we see in the Case of those Women, who have barbarously murder'd their own Offspring to cover the Shame of their Defilement. And 'tis a Token of a Person's being harden'd to the most desperate Pitch, when by Custom, and the Devil's powerful Infatuation, they arrive to such a *Brow of Brass*, as to know no Shame in these Ways. A *Whore's Forehead*, is a Proverb for the highest Impudence. But the less Shame they know here, the more overwhelming will their Shame and Confusion be hereafter, when the Fire at the last Day shall melt down the brazen Forehead, and then the very
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laying open their nasty Doings before God, Angels, and Men, will be (in St. Basil's Opinion, a Hell of itself) a Burthen utterly intolerable and overwhelming.

II. The *Unclean Person sins against his own Body*; as the Apostle aggravates it, (1 Cor. vi. 18.) He that is drunk, abuses his Drink; and he that is given to Gluttony, abuses his Meat: but the Unclean Person abuses his *own Body*: *He gives his Strength to Women, and his Years to the Cruel*, (Prov. v. 9.) The very inordinacy of Lust tends to destroy both the Strength of the Body, and the Vigour of the Soul: and many times these Partners in *Uncleanness*, do impart to each other one of the most loathsome Diseases in the World; in which, by the just Judgment of God, they rot and stink whilst alive, as if they had lain some Days in the Grave. Now what can equal the Folly of that Man, who when he may (with God's Leave and Favour) enjoy a *clear Cistern of his own*, to quench his Thirst with Innocence and Honour, yet had rather be sipping at every *nasty Puddle* he comes to, tho' it lies common to be trampled in by every dirty Foot that passes by it. The Expression is

Solomon's and the Explanation of it very easy. You have it at large, (*Prov. v. 15, &c.*) *Drink Waters out of thine own Cistern, &c.*

III. 'Tis a Sin that lays the *Conscience* waste, and deadens it as to its proper, convincing, awakening, and alarming Acts. And this, not only because the Purity of the Conscience must needs be so much and so frequently sullied by the many impure Wishes, Projects and Purposes, which necessarily go before the vile Fact; but also because *Uncleanness* is a Sin of that Bulk, that, like the Case of the *Trojan Horse*, the Walls must be broken down to receive it, it being too big to enter at the common Passage of ordinary Sins. So that now the *Unclean Spirit* has made such a Breach in the Soul of the Guilty Person, that he may march in with other Troops of Sin at his Pleasure. Now Intemperance, Murthers, Rapes, Robberies, Lyes, Cruelties, and all manner of Enormities, may find an easy Admittance: For indeed, they have no good Fence against any Sin, who are already become so desperately leud and profligate. They are, says the Apostle, *past Feeling*, (*Eph. iv. 19.*)
having

having no Sense of their dreadful Guilt, or of God's present Rebukes, or future Judgment, (*Prov. xxxiii. last.*)

IV. It sadly fullies and bemires the Beauty and Activity of the rational Faculties of Men. Their Reason becomes a Pander and Procurer for their Lusts, and the Man is turned into a Beast; his Industry languishes, and the Serenity of his Mind is over-cast. He cannot look back upon his Sin without Regret, nor look forward towards either Death or Judgment without Horror. So that now, just like the Beast that perishes, he can only look down upon his present Pasture, and try a while the fatal Experiment of putting by the Thoughts of eternal Punishment, by short and momentary Sensuality: Till at last the *Dart strikes him through the Liver*, (some Disease or other arrests him from God) and after a few Groans and Cries here, to awaken his Partners in Impurity, he goes down, (without infinite Mercy and timely Repentance) to the Place of Eternal Weeping and Wailing.

V. This Vice is destructive to *Humane Societies*. It destroys the Peace of Families, of Neighbourhoods, and many times of Kingdoms. The Prophet *Ma-*

Iachi argues from *God's making but one Woman for Adam*, when he could as easily have made many more, that therefore God saw it best for Man and for Human Society, that he should have no more, (*Mal. ii. 15.*) And so it is : for then the whole Desire is fixed on one, and the Love being undivided, must needs be greater ; and consequently the mutual Delight, Confidence, and Satisfaction of the Man and Wife, is much advanced hereby. Whereas the wandring and unruly Desires of the Adulterer and Adulteress are never at rest ; but, like Children left to their own Will, are always disturbing themselves and others. These brutal Lusts will bear no Government, Decency, nor Restraint, but do produce all the extravagant Impieties and Immoralities that the Devil can suggest, and the furious Wretches commit. Hence comes Murders, Rapes, Incest, and a Thousand Villanies and Abominations. For when once the Adulterer's lustful Eye has inflamed his Heart, and polluted his Mind with unlawful Desires, his honest Neighbour shall not so much as enjoy the *poor single Ew-Lamb* ; and he will not stick to *sacrifice the Owner*, to
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get Possession of it. And when at any Time any of these Libertines happen to be Rivals to each other in the same Object of their Lusts; what furious Outrages does it produce? Like the *Bulls of Bashan*, they run at each other with Passions equal to the extreme Fury of their Lusts, and so they maliciously break the *sixth Commandment*, that they may the more easily transgress the *Seventh*, and so make Murder a Help to Adultery. It is indeed impossible to number up the Fewds, Confusions and Mischiefs which this headstrong and violent Lust produces; so that our good God has mercifully provided for the Peace of Mens Minds, the Quiet of Families, and the Happiness of Societies, in that He has not only forbidden us *Concubines*, but has also forbidden to have *more Wives than one*: as we read, (*Luk. xvi. 18.*) *Whosoever putteth away his Wife, and marrieth another, committeth Adultery, &c.*

VI. 'Tis a Sin which above all others *despiseth God*. As we find a Prophet of God, testifying to the Face of King *David* himself on this Occasion, (*2 Sam. xii. 9.*) *Wherefore hast thou despised the Commandment of the Lord, to do*
Evil

Evil in his sight? viz. by committing Adultery in the Sight of God, which he sought, by many base Ways, to hide from the Sight of Men. There is always this *Atheistical Slight* of God in all secret Uncleaness, that such Sinners dare not commit their Lewdness before the Face of a Man, or but of a Child; when at the same time they do it without Fear before God; tho' they cannot but own that God sees every Circumstance, and will bring the whole Matter openly to Judgment. And yet it were better for them that all the World saw their Sin, than God, who hates it more than the best of Men can, and will avenge it more dreadfully. It was by force of this Consideration, that *Paphnutius*, a Holy Man, is said to have brought *Thais*, a common lewd Woman, from her Unclean Life; namely, by convincing her that she could not carry him into any Retirement, that would be sufficient to conceal the Sin from the Eyes of the All-seeing God.

VII. God was pleased to work a *Miracle* on all Occasions in the *Jewish Law*, to find out Adultery. As we read concerning the *Water of Jealousy*, which never failed to bring Rottenness upon the

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the Wife that drunk it, if she were guilty of that Sin, (*Num. v. 27.*) which shews it to be a most heinous Transgression in the sight of God ; a Sin to be *punished by the Judges*, as *Job* calls it : And the Punishment annexed to it by the *Mosaick Law* was Death, (*Lev. xx. 10.*) And 'tis now complained of by our King himself, (in his pious *Letter to the Bishops*, in the Beginning of his Reign) that our Laws are no stricter against so foul a Vice. So that if our Magistrates, and others, do not do what they may, and ought, to bring this notorious and scandalous Transgression to such Punishment as our Laws decree to it, (which is but too gentle) they do bring upon themselves the greater Guilt in the sight of God and Men.

VIII. The Person that falls into it is *abhorred of the Lord* : so says the Truth of God, (*Prov. xxii. 14.*) *The Mouth of a strange Woman is a deep Pit, they that are abhorred of the Lord shall fall into it.* Abhorrence is the highest Degree of Hatred and Indignation ; so that to be abhorred of God, whose Favour is the only Happiness and Hope of Man, is the most dismal Degree of Misery and Wretchedness. *Ye Adulterers and Adul-*
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teresses, (saith St. James) Know ye not that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God? The Righteous God hates your ensnaring and defiling Friendships and Familiarities. And to leave a Mark of God's Displeasure against this Sin, it was decreed in the Jewish Law, That a Bastard should not enter into the Congregation of the Lord, to the Tenth Generation. All that were base born, that is, of Carnal Fornication, were to stand without, in the Court of the Gentiles, as it were doing Penance for their Parents Sin in their successive Generations, for at least 200 Years, according to the most moderate Computation of the Term of Ten Generations, (Deut. xxiii. 2.)

IX. Unclean Persons are *seldom reclaimed*. This Sin so wastes their Conscience, blinds their Mind, bewitches their Fancy, and ensnares their Heart; and above all, it makes God depart to such a wide Distance, and gives unclean Spirits such Dominion over them, that perhaps fewer are reformed from this Sin, than from many others. And this is sufficiently declared in the Oracles of God. 'Tis said, (Prov. v. 22.) *He shall be holden in the Cords of his Sins.* He

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shall die without Instruction, and in the Greatness of his Folly he shall go astray. The Paths of this Vice are so intricate, and the Darkness it brings with it so gross, and the Chains of it so strong, that the Person that is involved in it, seems as unlikely to get out, as one that is gotten into a Labyrinth or Wilderness, in the Dark, and in Chains: In all which Circumstances together, his Escape is almost desperate and impossible. For we find Solomon himself lamenting bitterly over his own sad Experience of this woful Case, (*Eccl. vii. 26.*) *I find, says he, more bitter than Death the Woman whose Heart is Snares and Nets, and her Hands as Bands: who-so pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the Sinner shall be taken by her. Again, (Prov. ii. 18, 19) Her House inclineth unto Death, and her Paths unto the Dead: None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the Paths of Life. That is, (I conceive) e'en almost none, or so very few, as that they deserve not to be named in Comparison with those that perish in their Uncleanness. Yet the Grace of God is sufficient for all Men; and the Publicans and Harlots entered into the Kingdom of God, upon their*

their Repentance and Change of Heart and Life, (*Matth. xxi. 31.*) Yea, *Mary Magdalen* became a most devout and excellent Woman, out of whom our Saviour had cast seven Devils, and who is reported to have lived some Part of her Life in great Impurity. But then, she wept *Floods of Tears* afterwards, enough to wash her Saviour's Feet, and she *loved Him* far above others. Great Sins must have great Repentance, and this requires great and vast Assistances of God's Grace; and such Favour from him must be zealously and importunately entreated and prayed for: And then *with God all Things are possible*. He can even quench a Firebrand of Hell, and fix it as a glorious Star in the Firmament of his Glory for ever, upon such great Repentance.

Now, considering the extreme Difficulty of getting any one out of this Pit, and the Multitudes that perish in it; the greatest Punishments of Human Laws to affright People from this Vice, are the greatest Kindnesses that can be done them; for such severe Punishments would serve as a Fence set to keep People out of this *horrible Pit*. And for the same Reason, all publick

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Scandals, and Temptations to this Sin, should be suppress'd with as much Care as we would prevent the spreading of the Pestilence ; and all good People are bound in Conscience, and in Charity, to prosecute those lewd Wretches, who openly lay Snares and Enticements to this Sin ; for they *hunt for the precious Life*, and spread their Nets to destroy Immortal Souls.

X. In this Sin, two Persons are at once overwhelmed in dreadful Guilt and Pollution. And the Case must needs be very sad, where two Souls fall together, and where the double Guilt makes the louder Cry to Heaven for Vengeance. And when the deserved Wrath of God is come upon such, what an Eternal Hatred will it create betwixt these Partners in Pollution ; when they shall perceive that their forbidden Embraces were but like the deadly Stingings of a *Serpent*, which ever produce Pain, Misery, and Death. And of this Vice, they are usually sensible, so soon as the Fury of Lust is so much over, as to give them Liberty to reflect upon their Guilt with any Coolness and Sobriety ; even as *Amnon*, who was soon as *sick* of

of his admired Mistress, as ever he was sick for her.

XI. God has testified his heavy Displeasure against it, by many signal Judgments on Earth. Not to mention any of those Instances which are frequent in vulgar Authors, we find in the Holy Scriptures, that *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and other Cities and their Inhabitants, were destroyed by Fire from Heaven for their *Uncleanness*, (*Gen. xix. 13.*) And for this Sin, *Four and Twenty Thousand* were cut off in one Day, (*Numb. xxv. 9.*) And the Apostle applies this to all succeeding Generations, to take Warning by their Example, saying, *Let us not commit Fornication as they did, lest we perish* by some such terrible Vengeance of the All-pure God, (*1 Cor. x. 8.*) It was Lust that brought the Flood upon the old World, (*Gen. vi. 2, 7.*) It was this that brought *Samson*, God's *Nazarite*, to be the Sport of the *Uncircumcised*. His Mistress *Dalilah* was his Destruction, (*Judg. xvi. 4.*) And this also brought Wrath upon *Solomon*, God's *Anointed*, yea, his Favourite; His *Women* turned away his Heart, *2 Kings xi. 4.* So that the strongest of Men have been enfeebled, and the wisest of Men

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Men *infatuated*, by unlawful Lusts. And in all these Instances the Apostle's Words are proved true, (*Heb. xiii. 4.*) viz. *That Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* They may by Secresy or Power escape the Punishment of Men, but they cannot escape the Judgment of God: Which leads to the last Particular.

XII. We usually find in the Holy Scripture, that unclean Persons stand in the foremost Ranks of the damned. The *Goats* are particularly mentioned to *stand on the left Hand*, (*Matth. xxv. 33.*) *Be not deceived*, (saith St. Paul) *neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, shall inherit the Kingdom of God*, (*1 Cor. vi. 9.*) And St. John tells us where their Part shall be, viz. *In the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone*, (*Rev. xxi. 8.*) where the Smoak of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. O dreadful End of a brutal Sin! I wish every Person that is under any Temptation to it, would first try whether they can hold their Hand in the Fire which burns upon their Hearth for one Quarter of an Hour; and if this proves intolerable, let them seriously consider, how they can dwell with
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everlasting Burnings! which will be heightened by dismal Horror of Mind and Self Accusation, and by the heavy Wrath of an infinite God.

These are some of the Evils of this abominable Sin; but indeed the whole cannot be told us: The Mischiefs of it in this Life are innumerable, and the Punishment of it in the other unspeakable. Now to all this there are usually these two Replies made by impudent Creatures given up to this Pollution. The one is, that their Constitution so strongly inclines them to it, and that Custom has so rooted and riveted the Sin in them, that they cannot leave it: The other is, that 'tis the only Way they have to keep them from intolerable Poverty and Want.

To the *First*, who say, they cannot leave this Vice; I cannot but say, that if they cannot leave it, they cannot but be damned to Eternal Torment for it. But,

2. This is usually an idle Pretence, since they can abstain from it in the Company of grave and sober People.

3. The Grace of God is sufficient to control the most violent Dispositions, and to mortifie the strongest Lusts, and

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to plant contrary Inclinations and Delights in their Room. (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

Such were some of you, (speaking of Unclean Persons) but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

4. You had better live upon Bread and Water, to keep down the Heat of your Inclinations; and you had better accustom your self to bodily Labour, strict Watching, and hard Lodging, with fervent continual Prayer and Humiliation before God; all which may be helpful, and, by the Grace of God, very useful to you in this dreadful Case: You had better, I say, undergo the severest Discipline, to keep under the Body for a while, than to be tormented in Soul and Body for ever. As a penitent Gentlewoman of late, who refused to lye upon any Bed for some Years together, that she might the more deeply lament the Wickedness she had committed thereon; and who is said to be as famous for her Repentance, as she was once infamous for Wantonness.

For farther Advice, I must direct you to such Books, Friends, and Spiritual

ritual Physicians, as may give you more particular Directions than can be spoken to in this short Discourse. Only let me tell you, that the Suppressing of filthy Thoughts, and the Shunning of Temptations, will always be necessary in this your Warfare; in which I pray God assist you by his Holy Spirit.

And now, to such as plead, that their *Poverty* drives them to this accursed Way of Life: I reply,

1. There are many honest Ways of Providing the Necessaries of Life. And if they have not been bred to Labour, (which is their usual Answer to this,) yet they ought now to accustom themselves to it, rather than sell their Souls to the Devil for a Morsel of that Bread which goes down with the *Wrath* of God mingled with it.

2. The real Necessaries of Life are easily provided; if once Humility, Mortification, and Self-denial, come to prescribe the Quantity and Quality of our Food and Raiment.

3. God hath promised to add these outward Things to such as first seek his Kingdom, and the Righteousness thereof; if they are not wanting in a diligent, prudent, and frugal Use of proper Means

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Means to attain them, (*Matt. vi. 33.*)

4. If the Case were really as you put it, you had better *starve* here, than *perish* to all Eternity.

I therefore now, in the Close, turn my Discourse to those unhappy Souls, who have been defiled by this deadly Sin, beseeching them, by the Mercies of God, that they would not go on to make themselves *Vessels of Eternal Wrath*. Do but tell me what good all your past Licentiousness has done you? And what good End you can propose to your self in the farther Indulgence of it? It has perhaps already *exposed* you to Shame, Regret, Diseases, and publick Punishment by the *Magistrate*: and I pray you to consider, that this is but the Beginning of your Sorrows; yea, 'tis as nothing, if compared with the *Everlasting Vengeance* of Almighty God, which will assuredly overtake and overwhelm you, except you repent, and *become a new Creature*, through the Mercy of God, and the Sanctification of his Spirit; which I beseech the Father of Mercies to vouchsafe unto you, through our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver, (Psal. l. 22.)

F I N I S.

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